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The American Heritage Rivers Initiative was created to advance the goals identified by river communities. The Initiative has three objectives: natural resource and environmental protection, economic revitalization, and historic and cultural preservation. No new regulatory authority is created as a result of the Initiative. Likewise, no direct federal funding is available to the Initiative. Existing federal authorities and programs are used to assist the community partners in implementation of their goals.

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# Connecticut River



## What Makes the Connecticut River Watershed Special?

- It is New England's largest watershed - 11,000 square-miles in 4 states with 38 major tributaries.
- It is also New England's longest river - 410 miles.
- The Connecticut River drops 2,400 feet from its source before flowing into Long Island Sound.
- The lower 60 miles of the river are tidal, with the boundary between salt and freshwater about 17 miles from its mouth under normal conditions.
- The Connecticut River flow accounts for 70 percent of the freshwater inflow to Long Island Sound, delivering a daily average flow of nearly 16,000 cubic feet per second.
- The watershed was nationally designated as one of fourteen American Heritage Rivers.
- The entire watershed has been designated as the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, the only refuge encompassing an entire ecosystem.
- The river's tidal wetlands were designated "wetlands of international importance especially for wildlife", one of 15 wetlands recognized in the United States.

## What are the Long Term Goals?

- Support community based efforts to restore and protect the environmental, economic, cultural, and historic resources of the Connecticut River Watershed.
- Bring people back to the river by providing greater river access and encouraging investment in carefully planned river-front economic development.

## Progress/Goals for the Future

### What Partnership Progress has Been Made?

- EPA and four other federal and state agencies removed the McGoldrick dam from the Ashuelot River in NH to restore fisheries, water quality, create new recreation opportunities, and protect public safety.
- EPA and NOAA gave \$179,000 to CRWC to remove obsolete dams and construct fish passage facilities.
- CRJC provided \$131,000 towards 38 projects in their CT River Corridor Management Plan.
- MA Environmental Trust gave \$50,000 for five projects in 2001.
- EPA awarded \$7,000 to Pioneer Valley Planning Commission for combined sewer overflow education in Greater Springfield, MA.
- EPA provided \$95,000 to both CRWC and CRJC for erosion projects, including one in Charlestown, NH and for erosion site prioritization work on the river.

### What EPA Actions are Planned for 2002?

- More riverbank stabilization projects to improve water quality, preserve farm land, and enhance riparian buffers.
- Remove more obsolete dams to restore fisheries, improve water quality, create new recreation opportunities, and eliminate public safety hazards.
- Reduce bacterial loading to the Connecticut River.
- Reduce the Connecticut River nitrogen load delivered to Long Island Sound.

